

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3402

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

HICOMTERPACIS SAIPAN 02

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCON PFOR SPC

SUBJ: 14TH SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE, RARATONGA, COOK ISLANDS,  
SEPT 25-OCT 4

1. SUMMARY. 1974 SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE HAD PERSONAL  
STAMP OF CHAIRMAN, COOK ISLANDS PREMIER SIR ALBERT HENRY.  
SIR ALBERT MADE MOST OF ATTENDANCE BY FIVE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT  
AND TWO CHIEF MINISTERS, AND HAILED SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM  
OF UNDERSTANDING AS SIGNIFICANT STEP IN DECOLONIZATION.  
CONFERENCE STEERED CLEAR OF CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES (SUCH AS  
THE MEMORANDUM AND FRENCH NUCLEAR TESTING), AND CONFERENCE  
BUSINESS HANDLED WITH UNACCUSTOMED SPEED. IN SPITE OF  
INCREASED CONTRIBUTIONS, INFLATION AND RECENT DEVALUATION  
OF AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR PLACE SPC IN SOME ECONOMIC DIFFICULTY.  
END SUMMARY.

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2. FOLLOWING REPORT SUBMITTED BY DEPT OFF. HOWARD H. LANGE  
UPON ARRIVAL FROM 14TH SOUTH PACIFIC CONFERENCE, RARATONGA,

COOK ISLANDS. SENIOR COMMISSIONER STANLEY S. CARPENTER HAS READ AND APPROVED.

3. CONFERENCE CONCLUDED OCTOBER 4 UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP OF SIR ALBERT HENRY, PREMIER OF COOK ISLANDS. CONFERENCE FROM BEGINNING TO END DOMINATED BY SIR ALBERT, WHO PUT PREMIUM ON DEMONSTRATING VITALITY OF POLYNESIAN CULTURE AND HOSPITALITY IN THE COOKS, AND ON SUPPRESSING EXPRESSIONS OF DISCONTENT AMONG FELLOW ISLAND DELEGATES.

4. EARLIEST DEMONSTRATION OF SIR ALBERT'S PERSUASIVE POWERS RELATED TO MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WHICH MERGES CONFERENCE AND FORMER SESSION. MEMORANDUM, WHICH WAS NEGOTIATED BY SPC MEMBER GOVERNMENTS IN WELLINGTON IN MARCH, AND WHICH ALL MEMBERS INDICATED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO SIGN AT BEGINNING OF CONFERENCE, IN EFFECT MAKES SESSION, WHICH IN EARLY DAYS OF SPC WAS CONTROLLING BODY OF ORGANIZATION, INTO STANDING COMMITTEE OF CONFERENCE, THE COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS (CRPG). MEMORANDUM RETAINS SOME FEATURES OF CANBERRA AGREEMENT OFFENSIVE TO ISLAND TERRITORIES AND COUNTIES, SUCH AS WEIGHTED VOTING IN CRPG BUT CHAIRMAN QUASHED ATTEMPTS BY CERTAIN ISLAND DELEGATIONS TO OPEN DEBATE ON THESE MATTERS. CRPG IN FACT STRENGTHENED SOMEWHAT, AS ADOPTION OF MOTION BY FIJI GIVE MORE RESPONSIBILITY TO PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS OVERSEEING ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

5. CONFERENCE ATTRACTED HIGH LEVEL REPRESENTATION FROM SEVERAL COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIAN PM WHITLAM APPEARED FOR ONE DAY, THE FIRST ATTENDANCE BY METROPOLITAN POWER HEAD OF GOVERNMENT IN HISTORY OF SPC. MINISTER OF SCIENCE MORRISON ATTENDED MOST OF CONFERENCE FOR AUSTRALIA. NEW ZEALAND ROWLING ALSO VISITED RARATONGA, CONVEYING WELL-RECEIVED RE-AFFIRMATION OF SOUTH PACIFIC POLICIES OF THE LATE NORMAN KIRK. OTHERS ATTENDING CONFERENCE WERE PM RATU MARA OF FIJI, PM FIAME MATAAFA OF WESTERN SAMOA, PRESIDENT HAMMER DE ROBERT OF NAURU, LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS ROBERT REX OF NIUE, AND THE FIRST CHIEF MINISTER OF THE  
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GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS, NABOUA RATIETA.

6. STATEMENT BY FRANCE JUST PRIOR TO CONFERENCE THAT ATMOSPHERIC TESTING AT AN END APPARENTLY HELPFUL, AND SUBJECT DID NOT COME UP FOR DISCUSSION. DETERMINATION OF CHAIRMAN TO AVOID CONTROVERSY ALSO POSSIBLE FACTOR.

7. ONCE NEW CONFERENCE RULES OF PROCEEDURE ADOPTED, REMAINDER OF AGENDA HANDLED SMOOTHLY AND WITH RECORD SPEED. NEW COMMITTEE OF PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS OPERATION SOMEWHAT

MORE LABORED, AND WORK ON FINANCES HAMPERED BY HIGHER THAN ANTICIPATED INFLATION IN SPC AREA, AND BY RECENT DEVALUATION OF AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR, IN WHICH SPC CONTRIBUTIONS DONATED. IN SPITE OF INCREASE OF 15F IN ASSESSED BUDGET, AND CONTINUATION OF VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS, 1975 BUDGET SHOWS SIZEABLE SHORTFALL.

8. U.S.-PROPOSED AGENDA ITEM ON SUPPORT FROM INSTITUTIONS AND NON-MEMBER GOVERNMENTS OCCASIONED CONSIDERABLE DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF MOTION GENERALLY IN ACCORD WITH U.S. POSITION.

9. ONE OF MOST EMOTIONAL ITEMS WAS PROPOSED SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK. COOK ISLANDS AND GUAM LOBBIED VIGOROUSLY FOR CONTINUED LIFE OF CONCEPT, AND U.S. POSITION DISCUSSED EXTENSIVELY WITH USDEL OUTSIDE CONFERENCE. SENIOR COMMISSIONER ALSO INFORMED SECGEN THAT U.S. COULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO SUCH A BANK. USDEL, IN VIEW OF MUTE OPPOSITION OF OTHER POSSIBLE DONORS TO BANK, RISKED IRE OF TERRITORIES BY WATERING DOWN ALREADY WEAK MOTION ON BANK. RESULTING RESOLUTION KEEPS IDEA ALIVE BUT SHOULD INSURE SLOW DEMISE.

10. NOTING THAT PAPUA NEW GUINEA IS APPROACHING INDEPENDENCE, CONFERENCE REQUESTED PARTICIPATING GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE NECESSARY STAPS TO BRING PNG INTO SPC AS MEMBER GOVERNMENT AT APPROPRIATE TIME. RESPONDING TO SUGGESTION OF CHAIRMAN CONFERENCE ALSO REQUESTED CONSIDERATION OF NAME FOR SPC TO REFLECT INCLUSION OF TERRITORIES NORTH OF EQUATOR. THIS OF COURSE WELCOMED BY GUAM AND TTPI, AND BY U.S.

11. AUSTRALIAN DEL LEADER MORRISON POSED QUESTION OF WHETHER  
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BY END OF DECADE WHEN NEARLY ALL ISLANDS WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP IN SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM, BOTH FORUM AND SPC NECESSARY. MORRISON INVITED REACTION TO POSSIBILITY REVIEW CONFERENCE IN 1977 TO EXAMINE ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF SPC.

12. COMMENT. ALBERT HENRY S DICTATORIAL METHOD OF RUNNING CONFERENCEWENT LARGELY UNCHALLENGED, BUT WAS RESENTED BY MANY SMALLER ISLAND DELEGATIONS. NO MOTIONS WENT TO VOTE, FOR EXAMPLE, AS CHAIRMAN RAILROADED ALL BY ACCLAMATION. ALTHOUGH ISLAND DELEGATIONS CAME PREPARED TO DISCUSS WORK PROGRAM, PRIORITIES SET BY MAY PLANNING COMMITTEE ADOPTED VIRTUALLY WITHOUT DISCUSSION. ALBERT HENRY ONE OF MOST DURABLE AND RESPECTED ISLAND LEADERS, BUT UNDISGUISED ATTEMPT TO MAKE POLITICAL HAY OUT OF CONFERENCE BEFORE DECEMBER ELECTIONS IN COOK ISLANDS NOT APPRECIATED BY MOST DELEGATIONS. NEVERTHELESS, MERGER OF CONFERENCE AND SESSION SIGNIFICANT AND CONFERENCE CAN BE CONSIDERED SUCCESSFUL ON THIS COUNT ALONE.

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